

Message Text

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S - MR. EGAN

S/S : JLHOGANSON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 194954

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UR, US, ASEC, SOPN

SUBJECT: PRESS ARTICLE ON MOSCOW RADIATION

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER TO THE EDITOR WHICH
APPEARED IN AUGUST 5 WASHINGTON POST:

QUOTE AS A GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE SOON TO EMBARK FOR AN
OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENT, I WAS LESS THAN ENRAPPED TO LEARN
THAT FOR ALL THE GOVERNMENT CARES, I MAY YET LITERALLY
BE STEWING IN MY JUICES WHILE ON THE JOB. NEWS THAT THE
RUSSIANS HAVE TURNED DOWN THE MICROWAVE RADIATION AIMED
AT THE MOSCOW EMBASSY A BIT MAY ASSUAGE SOME SENSIBILI-
TIES AN OCEAN AWAY, BUT TO ME BEGS THE QUESTION OF WHETHER
HUMANS ARE BETTER RENDERED MERELY TOASTED RATHER THAN
FRANKLY GRILLED.

UNLESS I AM MISTAKEN, THE AMBASSADOR AND HIS STAFF WERE
INVITED TO MOSCOW AS GUESTS OF STATE. IS THIS ANY WAY TO
TREAT ONE'S GUESTS? THAT SUCH MALEVOLENCE WAS AUTHORIZED
IN THE FIRST PLACE IS LOATHSOME ENOUGH; THAT IT CONTINUES
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TO BE TOLERATED AT ALL IN THE ABSENCE OF UNEQUIVOCAL

DEMAND FOR CESSATION IS ONLY SLIGHTLY LESS A DISGRACE.
WHAT KIND OF EMPLOYER KNOWINGLY SUBJECTS HIS WORKERS TO

HAZARDOUS JOB CONDITIONS WITHOUT EVEN THE COURTESY
OF A WARNING? AND WHAT KIND OF COMMANDER FAILS TO TAKE
EVERY STEP TO GUARD THE SAFETY OF HIS MEN? ONE NEED
NOT BE A PHYSICIAN TO APPRECIATE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF
DISPROPORTIONATE INCIDENCE OF LEUKEMIA AND OTHER FORMS
OF CANCER AMONG PAST MEMBERS OF THE MOSCOW EMBASSY STAFF.
PERHAPS THE SURGEON GENERAL SHOULD REQUIRE FOREIGN
SERVICE SCHOOLS AND RECRUITING STATIONS TO POST THE
WARNING, "IT HAS BEEN DETERMINED THAT U.S. GOVERNMENT
SERVICE IS DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH."

LET US HOPE THAT IF THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION CANNOT
MORE FORCEFULLY ADDRESS ITSELF TO THIS HAZARD, THE NEXT
WILL JOIN THE MOSCOW EMBASSY STAFF AND THE REST OF US IN
DOING A "SLOW BURN" OVER THIS AFFRONT TO "HOSPITALITY."
SIGNED: ROBERT M. TARTELL, M.D., CAPTAIN, MEDICAL CORPS,
WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL CENTER, WASHINGTON. END QUOTE.

2. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF PRESS GUIDANCE WHICH EMBASSY
MAY DRAW UPON AS APPROPRIATE IN BRIEFING EMPLOYEES AND
ANSWERING PRESS INQUIRIES: (NO QUESTIONS AROSE AT
AUGUST 5 PRESS CONFERENCE.)

QUOTE: Q: THERE IS A LETTER IN TODAY'S WASHINGTON POST
FROM A DOCTOR AT WALTER REED WHICH TAKES ISSUE WITH
YOUR STATEMENTS THAT THE MICROWAVE RADIATION IN MOSCOW
IS NOT A HEALTH HAZARD. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT?

A: WE THINK STATEMENTS SUCH AS THIS FROM DOCTORS WHO
APPARENTLY ARE NOT WELL INFORMED ABOUT THE NATURE OF
THE MOSCOW RADIATION OR THE BIOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF SUCH
RADIATION AT LEVELS OF A FEW MICROWATTS OR LESS DO A
GREAT DISSERVICE. THE WRITER OF THIS LETTER HAS DONE NO
WORK IN THIS AREA AND HIS FACTS ARE WRONG. END QUOTE.

3.FYIONLY:AUTHOR OF LETTER JUST COMPLETED INTERNSHIP AT
WALTER REED. HE HAS NO EXPERTISE IN AREA OF EFFECT OF
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MICROWAVE RADIATION, AND NO KNOWLEDGE OF MOSCOW PROBLEM
BEYOND WHAT HE HAS READ IN NEWSPAPER. HABIB

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